

Message Text

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ORIGIN OES-04

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H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY QUITO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

AMEMBASSY LIMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 273065

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIS, EC

SUBJECT:GOE POLICIES REGARDING FOREIGN FISHING

REF: A. QUITO 8461 B. STATE 271438

1. REGARDING NEW REGULATIONS GOVERNING ISSUANCE OF
LICENSES FOR FOREIGN-FLAG FISHING VESSELS FOR 1975, MEA-
SURE CONFINING ISSUANCE OF LICENSES TO VESSELS UNDER
600 NET REGISTERED TONS COULD BE QUITE TROUBLESOME FOR U.S.

2. EMBASSY SHOULD APPROACH APPROPRIATE GOE OFFICIALS ASAP,
POINTING OUT POSSIBLY DISRUPTIVE EFFECT SUCH A MEASURE
COULD HAVE ON GENERALLY IMPROVING USG-GOE RELATIONS, AND
URGING GOE TO RECONSIDER IMPOSING SUCH A LIMITATION.

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3. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT MOST OF U.S. TUNA FLEET WOULD NOT

BE AFFECTED BY SUCH A REGULATION, A SIGNIFICANT SEGMENT OF THE U.S. FLEET WOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM OPPORTUNITY TO BUY LICENSES. EXCLUDED VESSELS WOULD FOR THE MOST PART BE MOST MODERN SEINERS AND NEWEST ADDITIONS TO FLEET. INITIAL RUNDOWN OF SIZE OF VESSELS IN U.S. FLEET INDICATES THAT AT LEAST 13 VESSELS EQUALLING SOME 20,000 TONS OF CAPACITY ARE OVER 600 NRT. THIS DOES NOT INCLUDE 15 NEW VESSELS WHICH WILL BEGIN FISHING DURING 1975 AND FOR WHICH FIGURES

WERE NOT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE. GENERALLY, HOWEVER, NEW VESSELS ARE AMONG LARGEST IN FLEET.

4. WHILE IT MAY BE TRUE THAT LAST YEAR ONLY THREE U.S. VESSELS OF MORE THAN 600 NRT PURCHASED LICENSES, FISHING WAS POOR IN AREA LAST YEAR AND FEW U.S. VESSELS ATTEMPTED TO FISH TUNA THAT FAR SOUTH. IN ANY CASE, POTENTIAL FOR SIGNIFICANTLY LARGER NUMBER OF U.S. VESSELS SEEKING LICENSES OBVIOUSLY EXISTS. WHILE MEASURES MAY NOT BE DIRECTED AT U.S., IT IS OBVIOUSLY U.S. FLEET WHICH WILL BE MOST AFFECTED, AND INTENT OF MEASURE MAY BE MISUNDERSTOOD BY MANY IN U.S.

5. U.S. FEELS THAT CONSERVATION RATIONALE GIVEN AS ONE REASON FOR TONNAGE LIMITATION IS POOR ARGUMENT. TUNA WHICH APPEARS OFF COAST OF ECUADOR AND IS NOT TAKEN SIMPLY MIGRATES TO WATERS OFF COAST OF OTHER COUNTRIES OR HUNDREDS OF MILES OUT TO SEA WHERE IT IS AVAILABLE FOR CAPTURE. IN ANY CASE, THESE STOCKS OF TUNA ARE UNDER STRICT CATCH CONTROL BY THE INTER-AMERICAN TROPICAL TUNA COMMISSION, (IATTC) OF WHICH THE U.S. IS A MEMBER, AND THUS ARE NOT SUBJECT TO OVERFISHING BY U.S. FLEET OR FLEETS OF OTHER MEMBER COUNTRIES. LARGER PURSE-SEINERS ARE ABLE TO CATCH MORE TUNA ON ANY GIVEN TRIP, BUT THIS HAS NO IMPACT ON TOTAL AMOUNT TAKEN FROM STOCKS IN EASTERN TROPICAL PACIFIC, AS THIS IS AFFECTED ONLY BY TOTAL AMOUNT OF QUOTA SET BY IATTC.

6. CONCERN OF USG IS THAT IF FISHING IS GOOD OFF ECUADOR THIS YEAR, NUMBER OF EXCLUDED US VESSELS WILL WANT TO FISH IN AREA, AND WILL, UNDOUBTEDLY, ATTEMPT TO FISH IN AREA
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EVEN IF UNABLE TO BUY LICENSES. POSSIBILITY THUS EXISTS FOR SEIZURES, AND, UNLIKE IN PAST, IF THESE LARGE SEINERS ARE SEIZED THEY WILL BE UNABLE TO PURCHASE LICENSES AND THUS WILL BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER SEIZURES UNLESS THEY DEPART AREA CONSIDERED BY USG TO BE HIGH SEAS.

7. REGARDING CONFISCATION OF CATCH MENTIONED REFTEL B., DEPT. IS AWARE OF PROVISION IN GOE FISHING LAW AUTHORIZING

THIS. DEPT. IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THIS AUTHORITY EXISTED
IN PAST OR NOT, BUT UNDERSTANDS THAT USUAL PRACTICE IN
PAST SEIZURES WAS NOT TO CONFISCATE CATCH. IF NEW GOE
POLICY WILL IN FACT BE TO SEIZE CATCH IN PRACTICE, THIS
ADDS ONE MORE UNFORTUNATE ELEMENT IN FISHING RELATIONS OF
TWO COUNTRIES.

8. IF THERE IS NO POSSIBILITY OF PERSUADING GOE TO RECON-
SIDER IMPOSING TONNAGE LIMITATION, PERHAPS TONNAGE LIMIT
COULD BE RAISED SO THAT EFFECT ON US FLEET WOULD BE TO
ONLY EXCLUDE FEW EXTREMELY LARGE SIENERS AND THUS REDUCE

SIGNIFICANTLY POSSIBLE FRICTION. INGERSOLL

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